

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 IO-14 ACDA-19 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

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O R 071420Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9552

INFO USMISSION BERLIN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 00248

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, FR, UK, UR, US, GW, GE, WB

SUBJECT: FRENCH FLIGHT THROUGH CORRIDORS TO EAST BERLIN

REF: BONN 166

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1. FRENCH EMBASSY REP INFORMED US JANUARY 7 THAT SENIOR FRENCH FONOFF OFFICIAL (DE MARGERIE) HAD DISCUSSED THE PROPOSED FLIGHT TO EAST BERLIN WITH ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT FAURE OVER THE WEEK END, OUTLINING THE SCENARIO SET FORTH IN REFTEL AND PRECEDING MESSAGES. FAURE REJECTED THE IDEA THAT HIS AIRCRAFT SHOULD LAND IN WEST BERLIN IF THE GDR OR SOVIETS MADE DIFFICULTIES WITH REGARD TO HIS FLIGHT.

HE REPORTEDLY ARGUED THAT TO LAND IN WEST BERLIN WHEN HE, THE THIRD-RANKING PERSONAGE IN FRANCE, WAS ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO EAST GERMANY WOULD CAUSE A MAJOR DIPLOMATIC INCIDENT. DE MARGERIE'S EFFORTS TO PERSUADE HIM OF THE POTENTIAL RISKS INVOLVED

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APPARENTLY WERE TO NO AVAIL.

2. FRENCH EMBASSY REP SAID THAT THE ASSESSMENT OF THE QUAI AND THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN BONN WAS THAT THE POTENTIAL RISK OF THE GDR OR SOVIETS CREATING PROBLEMS OVER THE HANDLING OF FAURE'S FLIGHT WAS VERY SMALL. FRENCH REP SAID THAT IF THE GDR OR SOVIETS WERE TO CREATE DIFFICULTIES, HE THOUGHT THEY WOULD FALL IN ONE OF THE THREE FOLLOWING AREAS:

A. THE SOVIET REP IN THE BASC MIGHT NOTE THAT THE FLIGHT HAD BEEN APPROVED BY THE GDR. IN THIS EVENT THE FRENCH CHIEF CONTROLLER IN THE BASC WOULD MAKE A DISCLAIMER, STATING THAT THE GDR HAD NO COMPETENCE IN THIS AREA.

B. THE SOVIET CONTROLLER IN THE BASC MIGHT STATE THAT THE FLIGHT WAS APPROVED, WITH THE GDR HAVING AUTHORIZED A LANDING AT SCHOENEFELD. IN THIS EVENT, THE FRENCH WERE INCLINED TO MAKE NO DISCLAIMER SINCE THIS WOULD BE A STATEMENT OF FACT, AND WOULD NOT MATERIALLY AFFECT ALLIED INTERESTS.

C. THE SOVIETS MIGHT ENDEAVOR TO INTRODUCE A GDR REP INTO THE BASC ON THE DAY OF THE FAURE FLIGHT. THE FRENCH REP SAID THE FRENCH WOULD STICK BY PRESENT CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR SUCH AN EVENTUALITY, I.E. THE GDR REP WOULD BE ASKED TO LEAVE AND THEN WOULD BE ESCORTED OUT IF HE REFUSED TO DO SO.

3. COMMENT: ON BALANCE, WE BELIEVE THE LATEST FRENCH APPROACH IS ACCEPTABLE. WE WILL PROBABLY BE FACED WITH SIMILAR REQUESTS FOR ALLIED MILITARY FLIGHTS THROUGH THE CORRIDORS TO EAST BERLIN IN THE FUTURE, GIVEN THE FACT THAT FRANCE AND THE UK NOW HAVE RELATIONS WITH THE GDR, AND WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO HAVE SOME GENERAL APPROACH FOR HANDLING SUCH FLIGHTS. THE LATEST FRENCH THINKING IS OBVIOUSLY NOT IDEAL, BUT IT MAY BE THE BEST WE CAN HOPE FOR UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

4. IF THE DEPARTMENT HAS SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT
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THE CURRENT FRENCH POSITION, IT MAY WISH TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDING TO FRENCH AT HIGH LEVEL IN WASHINGTON THAT THE FLIGHT NOT TAKE PLACE VIA THE CORRIDORS AT ALL, BUT BE CARRIED OUT ON A NON-CORRIDOR ROUTING, E.G. BY OVERFLYING CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE GDR FOR A LANDING IN EAST BERLIN.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS ASAP.

HILLENBRAND

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